

**CLAIMS:**

1. A method comprising:  
applying changes to candidate configuration data of a network device;  
applying an implementation-specific configuration policy to alter the changes to the candidate configuration data; and  
committing the altered candidate configuration data to operational configuration data of the network device.
2. The method of claim 1, wherein applying the implementation-specific configuration policy comprises:  
generating additional configuration data; and  
inserting the additional configuration data into the changed candidate configuration data.
3. The method of claim 2, generating additional configuration data comprises:  
identifying a configuration command within the changed candidate configuration data; and  
generating additional configuration data for the identified command.
4. The method of claim 3, wherein inserting the additional configuration data comprises inserting the additional configuration data into the changed candidate configuration data based on a location of the identified command within the changed candidate configuration data.

5. The method of claim 1, wherein applying an implementation-specific configuration policy comprises:
  - receiving a commit command; and
  - automatically applying the implementation-specific configuration policy in response to receiving a commit command.
6. The method of claim 1, wherein applying an implementation-specific configuration policy comprises:
  - generating a copy of the candidate configuration data; and
  - applying the implementation-specific configuration policy to the copy of the candidate configuration.
7. The method of claim 6, wherein applying an implementation-specific configuration policy to the copy of the candidate configuration occurs via an Extensible Markup Language (XML) Application Program Interface (API).
8. The method of claim 6,
  - wherein generating a copy of the candidate configuration data comprises generating a version of the candidate configuration data that conforms to an Extensible Markup Language, and
  - wherein applying an implementation-specific configuration policy comprises applying an Extensible Style Language Transformation (XSLT) script to the copy of the candidate configuration data.
9. The method of claim 1, wherein the implementation-specific configuration policy comprises an Extensible Style Language Transformation (XSLT) script.

10. A system comprising:
  - a memory to store operational configuration data and candidate configuration data;
  - and
  - a control unit to apply an implementation-specific configuration policy to alter changes to the candidate configuration data, and commit the altered candidate configuration data to the operational configuration data.
11. The system of claim 10, wherein the control unit applies the implementation-specific configuration policy by generating additional configuration data, and inserting the additional configuration data into the changed candidate configuration data.
12. The system of claim 11, wherein the control unit identifies a configuration command within the changed candidate configuration data, generates the additional configuration data for the identified command, and inserts the additional configuration data into the changed candidate configuration data.
13. The system of claim 10, wherein the control unit comprises a management interface to apply the implementation-specific configuration policy, wherein the management interface receives a commit command, and automatically applies the implementation-specific policy in response to receiving the commit command.
14. The system of claim 10, wherein the control unit comprises a management interface to apply the implementation-specific configuration policy by generating a copy of the candidate configuration data and applying the implementation-specific configuration policy to the copy of the candidate configuration.
15. The system of claim 14, wherein the management interface comprises an Extensible Markup Language (XML) Application Program Interface (API) to apply the implementation-specific configuration policy to the copy of the candidate configuration.

16. The system of claim 14,  
wherein the management interface comprises an Extensible Markup Language (XML) generator to generate the copy of the candidate configuration data, wherein the copy of the candidate configuration data includes a version of the candidate configuration data that conforms to the Extensible Markup Language, and  
wherein the management interface applies an implementation-specific configuration policy comprising an Extensible Style Language Transformation (XSLT) script to the copy of the candidate configuration data.
17. A computer-readable medium comprising instructions to cause a processor to:  
apply changes to candidate configuration data of a network device;  
apply an implementation-specific configuration policy to alter the changes to the candidate configuration data; and  
commit the altered candidate configuration data to operational configuration data of the network device.
18. The computer-readable medium of claim 17, further comprising instruction to cause the processor to apply the implementation-specific configuration policy by generating additional configuration data, and inserting the additional configuration data into the changed candidate configuration data.
19. The computer-readable medium of claim 18, further comprising instructions to cause the processor to identify a configuration command within the changed candidate configuration data.

20. The computer-readable medium of claim 19, further comprising instruction to cause the processor to generate the additional configuration data for the identified command, and insert the additional configuration data into the changed candidate configuration data based on a location of the identified command within the candidate configuration data.

21. The computer-readable medium of claim 17, further comprising instructions to cause the processor to:

- receive a commit command; and
- automatically apply the implementation-specific policy in response to receiving the commit command.

22. The computer-readable medium of claim 17, further comprising instructions to cause the processor to:

- generate a copy of the candidate configuration data; and
- apply the implementation-specific configuration policy to the copy of the candidate configuration.

23. The computer-readable medium of claim 22, further comprising instruction to cause the processor to apply an implementation-specific configuration policy to the copy of the candidate configuration via an Extensible Markup Language (XML) Application Program Interface (API).

24. The computer-readable medium of claim 22, further comprising instructions to cause the processor to generate a version of the candidate configuration data that conforms to an Extensible Markup Language.

25. The computer-readable medium of claim 24, wherein the implementation-specific configuration policy includes an Extensible Style Language Transformation script and further comprising instructions to cause the processor to apply the Extensible Style Language Transformation (XSLT) script to the copy of the candidate configuration data.